

Pastor Sylvester Williams

Durham City Council Ward 2

My name is Pastor Sylvester Williams and I am a candidate for the Ward 2 Durham City Council seat. I am running for the Ward 2 seat because I believe that with new leadership we can overcome some of Durham's most pressing problems and create a new environment where all Durham citizens can achieve their potential. One of my goals is reducing the disparity between Durham's neighborhoods and ensuring that all communities receive their fair share of public resources.

Before telling you about why I've chosen to run, please allow me to tell you a little about myself. I've lived at 404 Sparella Street in the Hayestown community in East Durham for the past twenty years. My current home is not far from Bernice Street where I was born 54 years ago. And while I travel to Raleigh each day in my job as an investment analyst for a local bank, I chose to stay in Durham and raise my family here.

Looking back on the house where I grew up with my parents, eight brothers and three sisters, our home was a modest one but one full of the love, challenges and rewards that most families face. I remember all of us piling into our white station wagon to go to church on Sundays.

By the time I was a student at Shepard Middle School I had a neighborhood paper route. I also held a series of jobs through my young adult life that would help ground me while a student Hillside High School and finance my way through Durham Technical Community College and the DeVry Institute of Technology.

My interest in accounting and business administration fueled my desire to have a career in the financial sector. I'm a firm believer that preparation plus opportunity equals success. I also believe that everyone can make a difference if they work hard, take personal responsibility and seize the opportunities in their path. I've held my position as financial analyst for twenty-four of the past thirty years.

In addition to my fulltime job, I'm also Pastor of The Assembly at Durham Christian Center. The word minister means servant and my call to serve means making a difference in people's lives, offering encouragement and sharing the message of hope in Jesus Christ.

As a Meals on Wheels volunteer I've seen many of the challenges that our citizens face. I've seen poverty face-to-face. I've worked to create more inclusive programs for overlooked youth while serving on the Youth Services Advisory Board for Durham County. I've also served on the Mayor's Council for Gang Violence and witnessed first-hand how disconnected some of our young people have become from the larger society around them. We need to build more bridges – not more buildings.

I also became one of the leaders of the Hayestown Community Association where we've worked hard to prevent the displacement of long-time and elderly residents in our community by the East End connector. My work with the Hayestown community created an opportunity for me to look at our neighborhood and its relationship to the entire city of Durham. And it became clear that some neighborhoods in our city were gaining while others were losing.

Yes, Durham has made some impressive gains in the past with strategies that worked during that era. Now our economy is in uncharted territory and what worked then is not working now. We need new leadership to create jobs for Durham residents. We still need to recruit high tech industries but we also need other industries that are better aligned with the skills present in our communities. This

means that we need environmentally friendly industries that can provide entry-level jobs to help lift families out of poverty.

Right now people who live outside our city hold over half of Durham's jobs. This means that we're losing tax revenue to nearby counties while a growing number of our citizens struggle with unemployment. This fact explains how Durham can generate the state's highest wages but also have one of its highest poverty rates. And despite over \$ 1 billion in tax money spent in downtown, unemployment and poverty increased from 1990 to 2000 in the census tracts around downtown. Unemployment and lost revenue are a drag on our economy and this situation must change sooner than later. But we don't have another twenty-seven years to fix it.

Imagine what Durham would be like if our taxes were used to more evenly distribute services to all our neighborhoods for better streets, community policing and jobs. Imagine what would happen if our small businesses received incentives to create jobs. They could hire local people and create thousands of jobs all over the city – not just in one area. Crime would go down, family incomes would increase, poverty would decrease, more people could afford homes and our city's tax base would increase. But most of all, our city would pull together to create an upward economic spiral and more opportunity for everyone.

I believe that our city can come together to break down the barriers that separate us, overcome our challenges and become the *new* Durham we want it to be.

It's exciting to me to think that as your Ward 2 city councilman I could help create a brighter tomorrow for *all* of Durham's residents. I want to become a "New Face for a New Durham" and I need your vote on October 6, 2009 for the Ward 2 Durham city council seat. Please visit my website at www.newfacenewdurham.org or call me at 919-559-8135.

Sincerely,



Pastor Sylvester Williams

PS The October 6, 2009 election is citywide and you can vote for me regardless of where you live in the City of Durham. If you'd like to host a fundraiser for my campaign, make a contribution or volunteer, please contact Adande Williams at 919-559-8135 or online at www.NewFaceNewDurham.org/Volunteer.php (volunteer) www.NewFaceNewDurham.org/Donations.php (donations).

Paid for by the Committee to elect Pastor Sylvester Williams for Durham City Council.